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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002093

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KE](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: KIBAKI THE KEY TO DADAAB

REF: A. 09SECSTATE101182
[1](#)B. 09SECSTATE100710
[1](#)C. 09NAIROBI2024
[1](#)D. 09NAIROBI1861
[1](#)E. 09NAIROBI1088
[1](#)F. 09NAIROBI923
[1](#)G. 09NAIROBI752
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[1](#)K. 09NAIROBI308
[1](#)L. 09NAIROBI267
[1](#)M. 08NAIROBI2655
[1](#)N. 08OSCRESTON11192012

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Ranneberger for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Embassy Nairobi has consistently engaged senior Government of Kenya (GOK) officials and members of the international community to resolve severe overcrowding in the Dadaab refugee camps (RefTels C-N). Since last October, the Ambassador has repeatedly brought to the attention of President Kibaki, Prime Minister Odinga and Internal Security Minister Saitoti the USG's concerns about a looming humanitarian crisis in Dadaab urging them to allocate additional land to expand the camps. The Ambassador has, on multiple occasions, met representatives of the international community, including UNHCR High Commissioner Guterres, to be briefed on conditions in Dadaab and review plans to obtain the additional land. In the Ambassador's most recent meeting with UNHCR, he urged Africa Bureau Head George Okoth-Obbo to ratchet up the pressure on the GOK, specifically urging UNHCR and the international community to target increased pressure on President Kibaki who has become the only GOK official who can now overcome the persistent central government delay in meeting its commitments to approve land for a fourth camp.
END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (SBU) Since the fall of 2008 when UNHCR first asked Embassy Nairobi to help it obtain land for a fourth Dadaab camp, we have steadily pushed the GOK to allocate land, to no avail. The Ambassador visited Dadaab in November of 2008 and publicly called on the GOK to allocate land to alleviate the suffering of refugees (RefTel M). Following UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Johnstone's February visit during which he obtained commitments from Prime Minister Odinga and Internal Security Minister Saitoti that UNHCR and GOK would pursue a

"three-pronged approach" resulting in the allocation of land (RefTel L), the Ambassador sent two letters to Prime Minister Odinga requesting his personal intervention to fulfill the agreements (RefTel I and K). Despite the GOK's reply that "progress has been finally made with the local council in Garissa approving the allocation of land to set up additional camps" (RefTel G), the GOK has yet to allocate the land. During the August 7 meeting between UNHCR High Commissioner Antonio Guterres and Kenyan President Kibaki and his national security team (RefTel C), President Kibaki ordered a high-level inter-ministerial delegation to go to Dadaab and report back to him in two weeks with recommendations for GOK action responding to the humanitarian challenges in Dadaab. To date, only a technical delegation has gone to Dadaab.

13. (S) A/S Carson's meeting with Prime Minister Odinga on September 24 (RefTel A) underscored the GOK perception of Dadaab as a national security issue. We believe the GOK has linked future action on Dadaab to its Somalia policy and believes (mistakenly) that their soon-to-be-launched initiative in southern Somalia (RefTel D) in support of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) will create conditions inside Somalia conducive to refugees returning to Somalia and thereby decongesting Dadaab. We do not agree that the Kenyan action will lead to sufficient numbers of Somalis returning to Somalia to decongest the camps and avert a humanitarian emergency. We believe the increased conflict and disruption to the delivery of humanitarian assistance inside Somalia will substantially increase the outflows and exacerbate the national security concerns of the GOK.

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14. (SBU) During his September 23 meeting with the Ambassador, UNHCR Africa Bureau Head George Okoth-Obbo related that he believes UNHCR had taken a step backward in its efforts to secure a fourth camp (RefTel C). Okoth-Obbo described the continued failure of senior GOK officials to take a decision on Dadaab as well as an exchange of "alarming" language that included the threat of bloodshed by Member of Parliament Farah Maalim if a fourth camp was established near his district. The Ambassador urged UNHCR to ratchet up the pressure on GOK officials and specifically on President Kibaki to make a decision on the land. The Ambassador strongly urged UNHCR High Commissioner Guterres to call President Kibaki and PM Odinga directly to follow-up on the failure to honor the commitments they had made to him in August and for UNHCR to strengthen its language about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Dadaab during UNHCR's September 28 - October 2 Executive Committee (EXCOM) meeting in Geneva. The Ambassador also requested the Department to bolster its Dadaab talking points with senior GOK officials at the UN General Assembly meeting and UNHCR's EXCOM and to urge other donors to do the same. Subsequent to the Department's request to demarche the international community on Dadaab (RefTel A), the mission requested UNHCR-Kenya to convene representatives of the international community in Kenya to update them on the efforts UNHCR has taken to meet GOK conditions for the expansion of Dadaab, the failure of GOK to take promised actions and to urge the international community in Kenya to renew their calls for the GOK to allocate land in Dadaab. Concomitantly, the mission has urged UNHCR-Kenya to continue meeting its commitments to implement environmental rehabilitation and local development projects in Dadaab and to be prepared to establish a fourth camp as quickly as possible if land is allocated.

RANNEBERGER